

HITLIST

# From Scotland with love Home-grown gifts for pooches, explorers and fans of the great indoors

SUSAN SWARBRICK

**W**ELL, the big festive countdown is almost upon us: it is exactly a month until Christmas Day. Have you started shopping yet? Fret not, we've rounded up a raft of ideas from designers, small makers, creators, authors and artists across Scotland. From candles and coffee to chocolate and cookbooks, here are some suggestions to spark inspiration for gifts and stocking fillers.

COFFEE LOVERS

Loch Lomond Coffee Co was founded by brothers Stuart and David Fraser in 2017, when they began roasting artisan beans at their Balmaha base. A bag of St Mocha Blend (from £9.95) will go down a treat with most coffee lovers. Among the other options are Natural Brazilian Blend and Colombia Washed/Colombia Natural (from £9.95). Themed merchandise includes tote bags, bobble hats, reusable cups and ceramic mugs (prices from £3.95). Glen Lyon Coffee Roasters in Aberfeldy, Perthshire – set up by Fiona Grant in 2011 – has an enticing mix of blends such as True North (“sweet, balanced, caramel”); Red Stag Espresso (“bold and fruity with a lovely lingering chocolate finish”); and West Coast Roast (“bright, floral, complex”).

Bags of coffee start from £8.25. Or sign up for a three-month subscription from £25. The accompanying merchandise is also superb, with enamel camp mugs, insulated flasks and bottles, T-shirts, beanies, pin badges, posters and sew-on adventure patches (prices from £5). Visit [lochlomondcoffee.co.uk](http://lochlomondcoffee.co.uk) and [glenlyoncoffee.co.uk](http://glenlyoncoffee.co.uk)

COSY CANDLES

Handmade on the shores of Loch Shiel, Glenfinnan Candles not only smell incredible, but they each have monikers that are joyfully evocative of magical moments, such as Bothy Nights, A Highland Christmas and Ceilidh (£16). Fiona Robertson, who took up the reins and relaunched the business earlier this year, draws inspiration from “the stunning and dramatic landscapes of Glenfinnan and the surrounding area”. Harry Potter fans will love the Steam Train candle



PHOTOGRAPH ANDREW JACKSON

(£16), described as “smoky oud with leather, wood and dark vanilla”. The Coorie Company owned by Sarah Smith has a list of candle scents that reads like a heavenly pairing menu. We're talking lemongrass and ginger; seaweed and juniper; coconut, vanilla and bergamot; golden berries and frankincense (from £6.50). Based in Fortrose on the Black Isle, the brand also sells matches in boxes with delightful motifs and monikers such as Lighthouse, Starlight, Swimmer, The Wave and The Sunflower (£6.50). Visit [glenfinnancandles.co.uk](http://glenfinnancandles.co.uk) and [thecooriecompany.com](http://thecooriecompany.com)

**HEAVENLY HOMEWARE**  
Interior designer and Scotland's Home of the Year judge Anna Campbell-Jones has created a gorgeous range of merino wool throws, scarves, cushion covers, stationery, art prints, ceramics and home fragrances inspired by her dual passion for 20th-century design and all things maritime. MasterChef: The Professionals

Her newly unveiled debut collection draws from the fascinating history of dazzle camouflage and the work of Norman Wilkinson, a British artist who was commissioned by the Royal Navy to design disruptive decoration for merchant and war ships during the First World War. Campbell-Jones has devised a trio of bold abstract geometric patterns, each named after Shipping Forecast areas: Malin, Lundy and Forth. All the products are made in Scotland from materials sourced within the UK. Prices start from £14.50. Visit [annacampbelljones.com](http://annacampbelljones.com)

**CULINARY MAGIC**  
The Hebridean Baker At Home (Black & White Publishing, £26) is the third book by Coinneach MacLeod and brings together “Hebridean Hygge” recipes alongside cosy fireside tales, folklore, poetry, stories of adventure and spectacular photography of wild Scottish landscapes.

winner Gary Maclean's latest book Scottish Celebrations (Black & White Publishing, £26) offers a modern twist on traditional dishes for special occasions. It should give plenty of food for thought when it comes to Christmas and Hogmanay fare. Grow, Cook, Inspire by Helen Cross (£20) is ideal for gardening-loving chefs, as well as those keen to rustle up seasonal dishes all-year round, while The Happy Diet Cookbook by Kayleigh Webster (£20) is perfect for the vegan foodies in your life or anyone curious about yummy plant-based recipes. Visit [hebrideanbaker.com](http://hebrideanbaker.com); [garymacchef.com](http://garymacchef.com); [growcookinspire.com](http://growcookinspire.com); [thehappydiet.co.uk](http://thehappydiet.co.uk)

**DOG-THEMED DELIGHTS**  
Walkie Mountains was set up by Glasgow-based Sarah Brand after she created a line of enrichment toys to keep her clever Border collie/Labrador pup Kira entertained. The online shop is currently stocked with festive-themed snuffle mats and

tug toys (we particularly love the candy cane, wreath and reindeer options), as well as natural treats such as biscuits and chews (prices from £1.75). Bowzos in Edinburgh, meanwhile, sells natty dog-themed accessories, including Harris Tweed collars, leads, bandanas and bow ties (prices from £8). How about a visit to Unleashed Dog Adventure Park? The sister sites at Pencaitland, East Lothian, and Cousland Park Farm, Midlothian, are great for those nervous about letting their dog off the lead in public spaces or who perhaps have pets with weaker recall skills. Both locations have agility apparatus aimed at boosting balance and strength, sandpits for digging, as well as sensory gardens packed with textures and smells to help reduce anxiety and stimulate the senses. Bookable sessions last 50 minutes and cost £15, for up to three dogs. Visit [walkiemountainstoy.com](http://walkiemountainstoy.com); [bowzos.co.uk](http://bowzos.co.uk); [unleasheddogparks.co.uk](http://unleasheddogparks.co.uk)



Clockwise from top left: Walkie Mountains; The Hebridean Baker Coinneach MacLeod; Glenfinnan Candles; and Anna Campbell-Jones's design collection

OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS

First up: some book recommendations. Bikepacking Scotland by Markus Stitz (Vertebrate Publishing, £20) contains 20 brilliant, multi-day, off-the-beaten-track cycling routes taking in everything from the drovers' roads of Perthshire to ferry-hopping on Islay and an alternative to the North Coast 500. Another cycling-themed must-read is Other Ways To Win by Lee Craigie (Vertebrate Publishing, £14.95) which is a beautifully written account of the former professional mountain bike racer's pivotal experiences and a testament to the life-affirming power of the outdoors. Gift vouchers may seem a cop-out, but not when they can be used for thrill-packed activities, such as kayaking, canyoning, gorge walking, white-water rafting or stand-up paddleboarding. Check out options from companies such as Nae Limits, Biggar Adventure and West End Adventure. When it comes to buying for an outdoors enthusiast, you can't go far wrong with a top-notch midge repellent. Mary Jean Highland Midge Lotion (from £5) is rated highly in helping keep these biting beasts at bay. Visit [markusstitz.com](http://markusstitz.com); [instagram.com/leecraigie](http://instagram.com/leecraigie); [adventurebooks.com](http://adventurebooks.com); [naelimits.co.uk](http://naelimits.co.uk); [biggaradventure.co.uk](http://biggaradventure.co.uk); [westendadventure.co.uk](http://westendadventure.co.uk); [maryjean.co.uk](http://maryjean.co.uk)

**LUXURY PAMPERING**  
Siabann – Gaelic for soap – is the brainchild of Fiona Ritchie, founder of the Alloa-based Ochil Soap Company. The handmade soap bars, body

lotions, lip balms and moisturisers have a chic, upmarket apothecary feel (from £5.50). The Christmas gifting range (from £15) has themes such as Pamper Me, Bedtime and Wee Treat. There is also a Bearn Man line of “gentle, vegan skincare products for the grizzly men out there”, including a beard oil and soothing post-shave balm (from £6). The Isle of Skye Soap Company in Portree makes – as the name suggests – hand-crafted aromatherapy soap bars (£5.20). Run by Fiona Meiklejohn, there are also fantastic bath bombs, with sumptuous scents such as orange, tea tree, geranium and lemongrass (£4.50). Visit [siabann.com](http://siabann.com) and [skye-soap.co.uk](http://skye-soap.co.uk)

**MOUThWATERING TREATS**  
Quirky Chocolate in Edinburgh offers a fun and delicious choice of artisan-made treats. There are Scottish-themed flavours including caramel wafer and toasted coconut, Dundee cake, iron brew with popping candy and Isle of Skye sea salted caramel (£5.50). All come in eye-catching packaging, the handiwork of graphic designer-turned-chocolatier Sandra Colamartino, who works with artists and illustrators from across Scotland. Check out the tongue-in-cheek range of chocolate bars emblazoned with “Scottish Icons”. Straddling culture, sport and politics, choose from tennis player Andy Murray, comedian Billy Connolly, the late actor Sean Connery or former First Minister Nicola Sturgeon (£7.50). Visit [quirkychocolate.com](http://quirkychocolate.com)

TECH



LENCO LBT-225WA BLUETOOTH TURNTABLE

**What is it?**  
A stylish and feature-packed record player.

**Good points?**  
The device blends classic design with modern functionality to reinvent an already burgeoning vinyl renaissance. Boasting an Audio-Technica AT-VM95E cartridge, this turntable delivers a high-fidelity audio experience. This cartridge is replaceable, allowing you to upgrade or switch it out. Design of the LBT-225WA has been well thought out, featuring a walnut veneer base which exudes a timeless and sophisticated aesthetic. A glass turntable platter adds a touch of elegance, while the carbon-fibre tone-arm and counterweight contribute to the overall durability and performance. The player employs a belt-driven mechanism, providing a smooth and reliable playback experience and aids ease of maintenance. Offering switchable speeds of 33 and 45 rpm, means it can accommodate a wide range of vinyl records. This versatility ensures that users can enjoy their entire vinyl collection without any compatibility issues. Connectivity is a strong suit, featuring Bluetooth 5.2 transmission capabilities. This means you can wirelessly connect it to Bluetooth speakers or headphones, offering flexibility in how and where you enjoy your vinyl records. Additionally, traditional speakers and amps can be connected via the included RCA connector cable. A standout feature is its USB connection converter enabling users to digitize and archive their vinyl media effortlessly.

**Bad points?**  
Some assembly is required, which may be a drawback for those who prefer a more straightforward set-up process.

**Best for ...**  
Anyone seeking a turntable that combines style and functionality or those who simply want to safeguard their music collection.

**Avoid if ...**  
You don't like the idea of having to fit the components to the unit.

**Score: 9/10.**  
*Lenco LBT-225WA Bluetooth Turntable, £299.99 (hmv.com)*

SEAN DIMMOCK